



Iowa's Women Deserve Equal Pay

Picture yourself negotiating a salary for your new job. You and your boss-to-be agree to a weekly wage of \$400. You agreed to this wage because your friend was just hired at the same business and accepted the same wage to do substantially the same job.

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One catch: your work week lasts seven days while your friend's lasts only five.

Sound crazy? Unfair? Of course. Yet that is exactly what the wage gap is doing to working women in Iowa and across America. Women are paid on average 73 cents for every dollar a man earns. This inequity means that the average American woman would have

to work an extra two days each week to equal the paycheck of a man doing largely the same job.

The wage gap is not just an issue for lower wage and blue collar workers. A recent study by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, reveals that the pay gap continues to affect women in management. In fact, the study found that the majority of women managers face a wider pay gap in 2000 than in 1995.

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Nearly two-thirds of working women provide half or more of their household income, and forty-one percent are their families' sole source of income. These families struggle to pay the rent or make mortgage payments, buy the groceries, cover the medical bills and save for a child's education.

Undervaluing women's work robs these families of an average of \$4,000 each and every year. For many women, work is not a choice; it is a necessity. And working full time for three-quarters of a paycheck just does not cut it.

Congress should pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, which I proudly cosponsor. This legislation would, for the first time, put wage discrimination on the basis of gender on the same footing as wage discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity. Additionally, it would toughen the remedy provisions of the Equal Pay Act so women can fight against unfair wages.

Passing the Paycheck Fairness Act is a good first step. But, if we really want to end wage discrimination once and for all, we must address the wage gap between jobs that are dominated by men and those dominated by women. That's why I have again asked the Senate to pass the Fair Pay Act. This legislation would address the historic pattern of undervaluing and underpaying so-called "women's" jobs. For example, social workers (a female-dominated field) are paid less than probation officers (a male-dominated field) even though both jobs require similar levels of skill, effort, and responsibility. The Fair Pay Act says that where conditions are similar wages should also be similar.

The Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Act would empower America's working women and their families to fight wage discrimination. It is time for us as a nation to say that we do value the work women do. We do value the contributions women make to society. And we will make the commitment to pay women what they are worth.